CHAIN FOR CHANGE

KATELYN WALTEMYER
Harrisonburg High School students participate in walkout in response to Parkland shooting

CHAOTIC COMMITTEE
Madisson Haynes
Student Government Association holds revote after appeal

NO STANDARDS
Kathleen Smith
Columnist discusses standardized testing and why JMU shouldn’t continue it

EMBRACE HER VOICE
Robyn Smith
JMU student and former ‘The Voice’ contestant continues musical career

NEWS
4

OPINION
11

CULTURE
19

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❂ The Rocky Horror Picture Show with Live Shadowcast at Court Square Theater 10 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Sunday

❂ Sip and Swing at Restless Moons Brewing, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.
Student Government Association holds major re-election

By MADISSON HAYNES
The Breeze

Following a two-week appeal process and controversy surrounding JMU’s Student Government Association major elections on Feb. 28, SGA is holding a rerun for those ineligible to vote in the initial election.

Jewel Hurt, a junior political science and public policy administration double major, was officially announced as the SGA president after receiving 899 votes, or 55.41 percent. Seemran Patel, a senior engineering major and Hurt’s opponent, appealed the election to SGA following the results. Patel received 663 votes, or 40.82 percent.

Nicholas Williamson is a junior political science major and the 2018 election commissioner. He stated that re-election is only being held for students not able to vote in the first election, including freshmen and transfer students.

“There were voting issues on the original major election on voting day, technical issues, which some people were ineligible to vote,” Williamson said. “So we will be adding on the votes that we got on the initial polling day as well.”

Waiting to hear a response from SGA, Patel reached out to Mark Warner, senior vice president of student affairs. According to Warner, he later directed Patel to Josh Bacon, SGA’s adviser. Hurt believes the election process has been unfair, including the decision to appeal.

“Honestly, I feel like several things have been done that don’t follow the elections policy,” Hurt said. “It’s the biggest mess I’ve ever seen.”

According to Patel, members of SGA later denied her appeal, keeping Hurt the official president. Patel then reported a series of election violations to the director of the Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices on March 1. Patel said the office is investigating the election.

“My campaign was fair,” Hurt said. “[Patel] tried to say things that literally weren’t true, but all of mine against her were true — we had the evidence.”

Hurt also reported violations against Patel’s campaign. This report was sent to the elections commission on Feb. 21 and reported a “failure to have any and every posted campaign materials approved by the University and elections commission,” according to Hurt’s report. Hurt’s violation report also included copies of complaints Hurt claimed to have received.

“There’s no evidence of anything,” Patel said. “Friday’s going to be rough … They are not really allowing the student body’s voice to be heard.”

The list of violations Patel submitted against the JMU SGA Election Policy included the use of handwritten ballots at polling stations and ad-hoc voting, which is “the use of a personal computer as a polling site,” according to the SGA policy. SGA guidelines state, “electronic polling shall take place for all Major Elections positions over a period of two days.” Patel also submitted multiple student eye-witnesses in the report who she says saw the violations occur. OSARP is currently investigating the election and its results.

“[OSARP] is also keeping an eye on this election because students are doing whatever they want,” Patel said. “This is a university-level election. No students should be having this much power over a candidate.”

The final decision for a re-election was made by SGA after it was requested by Bacon and the elections commission, according to Hurt, Williamson and Patel. However, Bacon has influence over the election and the process as SGA’s adviser.

Patel said she’s attempting to remain positive through the second election despite her feelings about the commission.

“I’m trying my hardest to be positive and stick to the good side of myself,” Patel said. “I don’t think the election commission team is in favor of that because I am the one who forced this rerun and they are not happy with what I did.”

Hurt, the announced president, believes the process has been tedious. She said her original campaign was fair.

“I’m not putting in as much effort as I did before, partly because I’m so exhausted, and I feel like this should have already been done,” Hurt said. “It’s putting the whole SGA behind … this whole process has just really upset me how it’s been handled.”

Following the re-election Friday, the official president and all other major positions will be announced, barring any unforeseen violations. Williamson believes the steps taken prior to the re-election have been fair.

“The process has been followed by all parties,” Williamson said. “We hope that we still have a good, fair election throughout the entire process.”

CONTACT: Madison Haynes at breezenews@gmail.com. For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezeNewsJMU.
By EMMA KORYNTA
The Breeze

Student-to-faculty ratio, undergraduate graduation rate and return on investment were some of the contributing factors that helped narrow down all 50 states to a top 10 for providing higher education. For all four years this particular study has been conducted, Virginia has ranked in the top two. On Monday, Virginia was named this year’s top state for higher education, according to the financial technology company SmartAsset.

One of the statistics that set Virginia apart was the undergraduate graduation rate of 71 percent — the second-highest percentage found within the study. JMU’s six-year graduation rate, as of fall 2017, is 82 percent, which is above the state-average percentage. While the study exclusively focused on states, administrators at JMU feel the study shows the strengths of the university.

“The rankings are nice, but what’s more important to us is providing the quality for our students,” Mark Warner, senior vice president of student affairs, said. “I think for us, it’s a testament to the people who work here, the faculty and the staff who work so hard to provide a quality education for the students who attend here.”

Warner attended JMU himself as a student in 1975 and has worked at the university ever since. He takes pride in JMU, especially given all the changes that have taken place since his time as a student.

“When I was here, we were not of the quality that we are now,” Warner said. “We were a very good institution, but every year, it’s gotten better and better and better, and so I think for one thing for graduates, it enhances the credibility of their degrees and for all of our folks going into the workforce. I’m just really, really proud of the strides JMU has made to become nationally known, in terms of quality and educational experiences that are offered.”

Bill Wyatt, JMU’s director of communications and university spokesperson, felt the recognition spoke for how Virginia schools function within the state budget.

“The fact that Virginia is able to put forth these schools with such high return on investment and high graduation rates and high retention rates … without overwhelming support from the general assembly, I think that that speaks volumes to the way that schools are managed,” Wyatt said. “The fact that Virginia is able to do more with less, that makes the ranking a little more amazing, more significant.”

SmartAsset has done studies for the past four years to rank states on the quality of higher education. This year, Virginia was ranked as the top state, in part due to the high graduation rate despite cost of tuition.
RANKING ‘That speaks volumes to the way that schools are managed’

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While the SmartAsset study recognized the state of Virginia as a whole, this announcement influences the way JMU administrators such as Wyatt and Warner view JMU. Additionally, the growing reputation of Virginia schools has impacted primary and secondary education in Virginia.

Scott Kizner, superintendent of Harrisonburg City Public Schools, feels that the recognition of public higher education within the state is promising for local public schools. Kizner, who attended JMU for his master’s degree as an educational specialist (’88), believes having stronger programs for higher education is encouraging for students looking at their options after secondary education.

“We have a belief that we need to prepare every student to have choices,” Kizner said. “Part of their choice is to consider going to a post-secondary education. Knowing our student population, most remain in the city of Harrisonburg. So they know that they can go to a strong public university and even private universities.”

Kizner, who has children of his own, feels that informing others on the possibilities of higher education is important. He attended three different universities in Virginia — JMU, U. Va., and Virginia Tech.

“With blockchain what comes first, opportunity or threat?”

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“We try to remind [students] that education doesn’t stop,” Kizner said. “It’s really preschool to Grade 8, or for some students, it’ll be graduate school. So I think this ongoing, continuous learning benefits not only our students but benefits the community.”

In addition to reputable higher education helping smaller towns within Virginia, some feel that quality higher education sets the students up for success. Wyatt found that JMU alumni’s return on investment was notable.

“That’s something that we see among our graduates,” Wyatt said. “[Students], whether they go to grad school or get a job … they’re employed pretty soon after they graduate and they go on to do great things and make a good return on their undergraduate investments. Those are things that we do really well, probably better than most schools in Virginia.”

This year is the fourth year in a row that Virginia was listed as the first or second state in this category. While there are several different websites that use a variety of measurements to determine top education programs, Wyatt still recognizes this importance of Virginia’s recognition.

“There are so many higher-education rankings out there; it’s hard to keep track of them all,” Wyatt said. “But certainly when there are ones out there that recognize JMU or the state, that’s certainly something to be proud of!”

CONTACT Emma Korynta at breezenews®gmail.com. For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezeNewsJMU.
The high school students spread the word through social media. SGA also took advantage of social media to get a message out, but this time, it took an unconventional approach.

According to Price, typically when SGA posts on social media, it’s in conjunction with the university and how it stands on a particular topic. But in this case, it decided to take an alternative method to deliver its message.

“We wanted to take a different approach, which was that we wanted to speak as students,” Price said. “We want the university to see it, but the real purpose was that we were talking to the applicants from one student to another.”

When students first started walking out of class in protest, some individuals showed concerns about participation resulting in disciplinary action. For high school seniors, many were unsure what to do. However at HHS, Prieto created a positive environment for her students.

“I made it very clear that this is not about punishing kids for speaking out,” Prieto said. “If you do it correctly, there shouldn’t be a price. Ours is not a protest about guns. Ours is about unity and us as a school and about solidarity with another high school.”

While there’s no guarantee participation will interfere with the admission process at some colleges, hundreds of schools participated in the walkout. For JMU, regular-decision applicants will be notified of their admission status in early April. SGA hopes the post will reach those who are awaiting their decision.

“We can’t control how the university decides to deal with this matter,” Hurt said. “But we can speak for the students and the student government association and say, ‘Look, this is something that we appreciate, that students around the country are taking part in and this is something we welcome for peers.’”

CONTACT

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Members of the Harrisonburg Police Department were in support of students participating in the chain.

Students walked through the halls hand in hand, creating a unity chain to remember the Parkland shooting.

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Students walked through the halls hand in hand, creating a unity chain to remember the Parkland shooting.
WORLD: TRUMP EXPECTED TO MEET WITH KIM JONG UN

President Donald Trump agreed to meet with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un (pictured) by the end of May. The location is yet to be determined, but any meeting between Trump and Kim will break from decades of historical precedent. There’s never been direct communication between the leaders of the two nations due to the United States’ fear of legitimizing the Kim regime. The anticipated meeting follows months of tension between the U.S. and North Korea over the latter’s nuclear missile program. According to Chung Eui-yong, South Korea’s national security adviser, Kim Jong Un is willing to cease nuclear missile testing.

NATIONAL: SENATE PASSES DEREGULATION OF BIG BANKS

The United States Senate passed a bill Wednesday that would loosen previous strict regulations implemented following the 2008 global financial crisis. According to The Washington Post, the bill would benefit over two dozen banks. The bill passed with a 67-31 vote, receiving somewhat bipartisan support despite some division among Democrats. The bill is intended to give regional banks relief from prior regulations and would also benefit the banks’ stockholders. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) (pictured) opposed the legislation.

LOCAL: HOUSE GOP CANDIDATES CRITICIZE COMMITTEE

The campaigns of Ben Cline, Chaz Haywood, Ed Justo, Kathryn Lewis and Douglas Wright issued a joint statement that criticized the GOP for waiting to release the names of the delegates attending the party’s nominating convention in May. The candidates are competing to replace Bob Goodlatte (pictured), who isn’t running for re-election, as representative of Virginia’s sixth congressional district. Haywood stated that the delay is a result of the party establishment devising rules to favor a particular candidate over the other. Scott Sayre, the GOP committee chairperson, believes the allegations are unfounded. Additionally, Sayre denied that the delegate list will be released to one campaign before the rest.
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FREE ADMISSION TO BOTH EVENTS!
Podcasts spark imagination

HANNAH ROBINSON | medicine for the soul

Take a trip with me to a much simpler time, when you ran barefoot in the yard and played outside with friends until the sun went down. You lived in a world of your own, a world where trees were friendly giants and fireflies were fairies. Contrary to what you might believe, the only difference from then to now is the amount of imagination you have.

Chalk was the key to a new world. It turned sidewalks into art and a boring summer day to one you’d remember for the rest of your life. At some point, however, we traded chalk for iPhones and binge-watching, signing our imagination away in the process.

A study conducted by researcher Emma Rodero at Pompeu Fabra University, found that listeners of podcasts are capable of conjuring more vivid images in their minds and have high levels of emotional involvement in the story they’re listening to. Podcasts allow you to rediscover your imagination without the pesky task of building a time machine. Because podcasts lack visual stimuli, the audience is forced to listen more intently than it would watching a television show or going to the movies.

Whether it’s imagining what a show’s host looks like or envisioning what treasures you’d find on the ocean floor while a diver tells their story — podcast listeners are constantly generating creative scenarios and landscapes in their mind’s eye, without needing to be visually stimulated. Increasing your levels of imagination through podcasts can become useful in the future by enhancing your problem-solving skills, preserving your memory and improving your social actions.

In a world of excessive talking, the art of listening means being content to listen to the entirety of someone else’s thoughts before impatiently jumping in with your own ideas and opinions — a common vice for many. In his novel “Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff,” American author, psychotherapist and motivational speaker Richard Carlson states, “We often treat communication as if it were a race. It’s almost like our goal is to have no time gaps between the conclusion of the sentence of the person we are speaking with and the beginning of our own.”

Like any valuable skill, listening takes time and practice to master. However, you may find that goal easier to achieve by using podcasts as mental exercise. Because the opportunity for dialogue is absent from podcasts, the audience must simply listen, reserving its own commentary for a later time, all the while learning how to truly soak in someone else’s words.

Boosting your imagination and enhancing listening skills aren’t the only benefits to be found by listening to podcasts. Turning on a show while cooking, cleaning or going for a drive helps by increasing an individual’s ability to multitask. Unlike music, which is extremely easy to drown out, and movies where investment is essential to understanding, podcasts allow you to consume information while still productively accomplishing tasks in the process. While binging allows an escape where you can turn off your mind, podcast introduce a way to relax while actively exercising your mind.

Podcasts also work to pique curiosity by introducing new ideas and possibilities you’ve previously been closed off to. You may find yourself wanting to explore healthier ways of eating or hearing what it’s like to go to law school from an actual Harvard graduate. Listening to podcasts enables you to crack open doors you’re curious about while gaining more knowledge and skills along the way.

College students are starving for an outlet that allows them to relax while still soaking in information. Although I’ll be the first to say a little binge session does the heart good, with each passing day the extinction of imagination looms. In a world where the media tells you what’s important, information is sitting in podcasts just waiting for you to uncover it.

Hannah Robinson is a senior communication studies major. Contact Hannah at robinshi@dukes.jmu.edu.
Standardized testing needs to be stopped

KATHLEEN SMITH | contributing columnist

I have firsthand experience with standardized testing in the School of Communication Studies. In order to be accepted into the major, all students are required to take two SCOM classes. Students’ acceptances are decided based on their grades in both classes averaged together. There’s a catch, though — for one of the classes, there are different sections led by different teachers. But the tests, which determine a large portion of one’s grade, are standardized. Other majors also employ the standardized testing technique.

This is problematic for many reasons. Firstly, teachers teach different concepts different ways. Having one singular test for everyone applying to the major doesn’t reflect this. Some classes cover certain concepts more thoroughly than other classes do. Trying to squeeze everything from different classes with different teachers into one test is nearly impossible.

Furthermore, having a standardized testing approach to admitting people into a major can also affect the way concepts are taught. According to a policy brief by the National Council of Teachers of English, standardized testing can “change the nature of teaching.” It “limits student learning because they focus only on cognitive dimensions, ignoring many other qualities that are essential to student success” and causes professors to teach to the test. This means that they only talk about concepts that will be on the standardized test, as opposed to being able to explore different things and ideas. This isn’t only a huge obstacle in a student’s potential to learn, but it also destroys the depth of the curriculum.

Standardized testing has also shown to be lacking in objectivity. According to the Washington Post, standardized testing is created by and for the dominant culture, and they reflect that culture. At JMU, where diversity is celebrated and encouraged, standardized testing is outdated and backward. In order to move forward as a university, one must start with small things, and this includes the way tests are given.

JMU has removed the requirement for SAT and ACT scores for students applying into JMU, which is a step in the right direction. Now it’s time for them to remove the standardized testing in the SCOM department and other departments. A better way to test students for admittance into majors would be to allow each teacher to write their own exams that reflect what was taught in the class. This takes away a lot of confusion and missed concepts that could occur between the different classes.

There’s a long way to go before standardized testing can be eradicated throughout the U.S., but taking small steps is still progress.

JMU students deserve to be given equal opportunities to enter into any major they wish. Standardized testing is a thing of the past, and JMU needs to progress toward the future.

Kathleen Smith is a senior communication studies major. Contact Kathleen at smit27ke@dukes.jmu.edu.
RA pay doesn’t reflect work put in

LUKE BORMAN | contributing columnist

The work of a resident adviser is tough and highly diverse. The amount of time spent on duty can vary from six nights per semester for some, to two or three per week for others. Likewise, some have to take care of twice as many residents as others. So then, it’s confusing that they all get paid the same.

Equal pay for equal work is an intuitive economic principle, meaning that unequal pay for unequal work should be just as intuitive. But the significant disparity in work RAs do isn’t matched with an equivalent disparity in pay. According to an email from the Office of Residence Life, RAs at JMU get paid a flat rate of $4,389 their first year, which is increased every subsequent year they stay an RA, despite the amount of work required for the position varying greatly by hall. Some RAs have to be on duty more frequently than others, yet they receive the same pay.

The amount of time an RA has to spend on duty, meaning working at the front desk of a hall and making rounds, depends entirely on how large that hall is. Every residence hall requires the same amount of time on duty per week, while the number of RAs in a hall can differ dramatically. While most halls only have one RA on duty at a time, some of the larger halls have two at a time in order keep things more equal. However, in some of these halls, the second RA on duty just means that instead of each RA going on three times per semester, they go on six times.

Other halls, where only one RA is on duty at a time, still require their RAs to be on duty two to three times per week. Within individual halls, too, there are discrepancies. One RA in a hall may have 18 residents to look after, while on another floor an RA has 30. Different amounts of residents obviously require different amounts of effort.

It’s not fair to those who work so much more to get the same compensation as those who might work far less. This is an easy concept to understand, yet is largely overlooked.

Some might incorrectly assume an easy fix to this is to pay less to those who work less, but there’s a plethora of reasons why that’s not the answer. Chief among these is the fact that RAs are already underpaid, considering how important a role they play in on-campus life and particularly in the transformative first year of many college students. Another important reason is that the Office of Residence Life is always looking for more RAs and reducing their pay would discourage people from applying or staying on for longer. Reducing pay for some RAs would likely reduce the size of the applicant pool, which would mean ORL wouldn’t have as many people to choose from in the RA process. It follows then, that raising the pay for some RAs would increase the size and diversity of the applicant pool.

Raising the pay for RAs who work more would fix problems for both employee and employer, a rare case of the two’s interests aligning. The main problem is that obviously it costs more money, but spending more on RAs should clearly be a priority.

If at all possible, this pay disparity should be remedied immediately. If not possible right away, it should at least be a top priority for JMU and ORL, as it makes everyone better off. We say we care about RAs and the on-campus experience, so let’s live up to our words.

Luke Borman is a junior international affairs major. Contact Luke at bormanln@dukes.jmu.edu.

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College and dietary restrictions don’t go together

RISHMITA AICH  pride and prejudice

I realized that dining in social situations is always going to be more about the people we eat with than the food on our plates. I realized this when I refused my grandmother’s traditional rice pudding and made her cry or when I had to awkwardly sit through the ice cream parlor visit with my friends, while they all sampled each other’s ice creams and discussed the flavor of the day.

Let’s face it: Having dietary restrictions is tricky, cumbersome, expensive and often outright embarrassing. No matter how much we try, there’s no amount of accommodation that can satisfy a food lover on a strict diet. Ever since I was diagnosed with chronic inflammatory bowel disease, I’ve been trying to make sense of how to make peace with this seemingly unjust routine of a dairy-free, alcohol-free diet. But the toughest part of being on a dietary restriction isn’t the lure of the forbidden food — it’s the social implications of it.

Placing a complex order at Dunkin’ Donuts isn’t embarrassing, but leaving a long line of famished students waiting behind me while the cashier or waitress struggle to understand the difference between a pop-culture trend and a fad, fancy and an obnoxious rendering of one’s condition — an expensive check. One either becomes a subject of sympathy or strong judgment.

Some of it also happens because people confuse the concept of dietary restrictions with dietary preferences. I’ve had friends who’ve often described their food preferences as allergies because they’ve been too shy to say they went gluten-free because they heard it worked wonders for celebrities like Jennifer Aniston. Diet preferences have always been considered a fad, fancy and an obnoxious rendering to a pop-culture trend. However, dietary restrictions and preferences can’t fall into the same basket.

The difference between them is as simple as people avoiding cheese because they detest the smell of it and me avoiding cheese because even a smidge of it could send my body into an autoimmune witch hunt that’ll, over time, eat away at the lining of my small intestine.

I think it’s important that we understand the difference between these two concepts for the sake of the hardworking members of the kitchen staff preparing one’s meal, for the patients and for one’s body. I’m not advocating that dietary preferences are any less serious than diet-related chronic diseases. I’m simply pointing out the pressure of societal judgment on diets.
DIET | Difficult eating restrictions

There’s stigma attached with dietary restrictions, too. It arises from some inherent beliefs of how we look at chronic illnesses — like tragic flaws that make us weaker as individuals, that haunt for life. Chronic conditions are looked at as something that puts one out of the race for success.

College students are infamously known for living on junk food — ramen, corn dogs and Arby’s frozen curly fries are all staples. The glory of pulling all-nighters and ordering pizza after midnight are memories to scrapbook in our minds for the rest of our lives. However, these unhealthy food choices show passiveness toward food, and only means focusing on more important things. I wonder if it’s even fair to hold on to the idea in 21st-century America where half of all American adults are diagnosed with a chronic disease.

Diet-related chronic illnesses are a product of agricultural post-industrialization, in developing countries. Being diet-conscious and following a strict regime is, in fact, upping the ante for one’s survival in the race. Special diets are a way to armor up against the chemically processed, factory-farmed food.

Social situations are tricky because they involve jelling with one’s surroundings while pertaining to personal needs. But one should never feel ashamed to order a gluten-free, garlic-free, cauliflower-free meal, no matter how complex and customized an order is. Feeding people around the table or sharing a meal with someone is about connecting with them, not about blending in or pleasing them. So it’s important that everyone’s preferences and restrictions are honored.

Rishmita Aich

Rishmita Aich is a senior media arts and design major. Contact Rishmita at aichrx@dukes.jmu.edu.

“There’s a stigma attached with dietary restrictions, too. It arises from some inherent beliefs in how we look at chronic illnesses like tragic flaws — that make us weaker as individuals, that haunt for life.”

Rishmita Aich
WNIT OPENING ROUND TONIGHT!

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL VS. ETSU @ 7 PM

FREE ADMISSION WITH JACARD
The Lady Jane, a picturesque downtown Harrisonburg boutique, is filled to the brim with vintage decor and local artisan goods. A young, gray tabby cat jumps around the store, swatting at novel-themed jewelry and greeting customers with soft purrs. Evi, The Lady Jane’s most recent foster cat from local rescue Cat’s Cradle, quietly complements the shop’s charming atmosphere.

“Evi, the 13th cat to find its family in The Lady Jane, was adopted on Saturday, but Christensen hopes to have another foster in the store within a few weeks. Christensen, a lifelong animal lover, used to walk by Cat’s Cradle’s windows every day on her way to the shop, often stopping to admire the cats. This close proximity ultimately spurred a lasting collaboration between Christensen and the shelter.

“I think it’s been a great partnership and I think it’s great they’re back across the street,” Christensen said. “We walked over one day and talked to them and within a week, we had a foster in the shop.”

Christensen’s only concern about fostering in the store is alienating people with pet allergies, so she keeps a sign posted on the door whenever she has a cat. Despite these worries, she feels the reactions from customers have been overwhelmingly positive.

“You’ll come in a lot of the time and people will be sitting on the floor playing with the cats. People stop on their lunch break to visit and it’s just been a really fun way of connecting with people in the community,” Christensen said. “It’s good socialization for our fosters and it’s something I really enjoy also.”

Customers aren’t the only ones who enjoy the cats — Christensen also loves the comforting presence of having an animal in the store. As a small-business owner, she spends a lot of time working alone, but the cats help her feel more at home. Christensen’s fosters are usually spread out by a few weeks, so when she finds herself without one, she often brings her rescue dogs in.

“When we’re in between fosters, the shop feels so quiet,” Christensen said. “I think especially in the wintertime when things are gloomy and cold ... it just feels a lot more cozy and homey to me to have an animal in the shop.”

While Christensen appreciates the bonds she’s made with both her foster cats and some of The Lady Jane’s local artists — who she says stop by much more frequently when she has a foster — one of her favorite aspects is connecting with other Cat’s Cradle volunteers.

“I’ve met a lot of really great people through the organization,” Christensen said. “I’ve had multiple cats in the shop that had been foster-homed previously, where they were taken amazing care of, but they weren’t getting as much exposure, and so it’s been really fun to connect with other volunteers and build friendships with them.”

One such foster is Ingrid Moran, a Harrisonburg resident who’s fostered several of The Lady Jane’s cats before they moved into the store. Moran makes sure to find time to visit whichever feline resident is in the shop, especially if she’d previously fostered them.
“Evi, the one that was just there, was with me for a year before she went there,” Moran said. “So you get attached, but I also know that they are better off if they have their own family. I find that when I take them to Sari’s, she always finds them a wonderful home.”

Emily Wicht is a Harrisonburg resident who gave one of Christensen’s fosters a forever home back in January. Unaware that Christensen had started fostering cats in the store, Wicht browsed through The Lady Jane during First Fridays Downtown and noticed a lovable four-legged friend at her feet and quickly fell in love. Within a few weeks, Wicht had a new animal sibling for her dog, Tater Tot.

“They’re best friends. They’ve been best friends ever since, like, the second day,” Wicht said. “They take naps together and play catch together and yeah, they’re a match made in heaven.”

Soon after adopting her cat, who was formerly named Lydia, Wicht renamed her Nikki Sparkles. Wicht explains that she “finds it weird when cats have people names,” and her then-newborn niece also had the name Lydia. So she took to Facebook, posting a cute picture of her furry kitten and hoping someone would suggest a replacement name.

“It was by far my most popular post in all of the 15 years I’ve been on Facebook,” Wicht said.

Wicht’s friend, who goes by Nikki Sparkles on Facebook for privacy reasons, suggested Tommy. What started off as an ordinary Facebook comment soon became the basis for Wicht’s cat’s out-of-the-ordinary name.

“My brother, who’s just my favorite person in the world ... saw the comment and he said, ’Is it just me or does Nikki Sparkles make a really good cat name?’” Wicht said. “And it just took off. The name just went from there.”

Although finding loving homes like Wicht’s for her fosters is Christensen’s ultimate goal, she still has a difficult time letting go. Christensen says she shed a few tears while parting with her first foster, but she’s come to view the process more positively.

“I get to hear how much the cat has made their lives happier and vice versa, how happy the cats are, and that’s definitely helped me,” Christensen said. “It’s not that it’s not hard for me to say goodbye anymore. It’s that I’m more excited than sad.”

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The novel ‘Only Child’ tells the story of a family losing a child in a school shooting.

Grief from gun violence

Every day in America, it seems as if there’s another school shooting making headlines. While the number of school shootings keeps increasing, each individual shooting fractures families beyond repair as they deal with the never-ending grief and sadness.

Rhiannon Navin’s debut novel, “Only Child,” gives readers a glimpse into the lives of grieving families who face the greatest loss imaginable. In an interview with The Guardian, Navin explained that she began writing the novel as a response to her children’s experiences with lockdown drills in school. The drills gave both her and her children anxiety about the normalcy of school shootings, and she began writing in hopes of informing herself as well as other worried parents.

The novel follows the lives of the Taylor family after a school shooting occurs in their small town outside New York City. The family struggles to cope, especially after it’s revealed the shooter, Charles, was the son with autism of the beloved security guard, Charlie. This causes an awkward atmosphere in the community, as many of the parents begin pursuing legal action against Charlie and his family. The families feel that Charles’ parents are responsible for his actions due to not getting their child necessary mental health treatment. The novel addresses many of the concerns regarding the gun-control debate, specifically that of mental health.

The Taylor family struggles as they come to terms with the loss of their 10-year-old son, Andy, in a school shooting. Andy’s 6-year-old brother Zach, a survivor of the shooting, narrates the novel. Zach not only copes with the trauma of surviving a school shooting and losing a brother, but watches everything he’s ever known fall to pieces. Navin expertly inhabits the mind of a 6-year-old, resulting in a devastatingly simple and believable account of the tragedy.

A main chunk of the narrative focuses on the relationship between Zach’s parents. Zach’s mother and father have polar-opposite reactions to the tragedy. Zach’s mother experiences extreme emotional distress and a sadness so intense that she’s hospitalized. The sadness then turns into anger and rage and Zach frequently compares her to a snake ready to strike. She channels her emotions into making change by doing interviews and leading the charge for the lawsuit.

Zach’s father, however, is rather subdued and doesn’t break down until the end of the book. He immediately steps into the role of the comforter of the family and community, bottling up his own emotions until they spill over. This dynamic between two opposite reactions unfolds throughout the novel and shows how incredibly human Navin has crafted her characters. At times, their decisions are rather questionable as they lash out at family members and friends, but there’s no better way to show the difficulty of coping with such a loss. The reader doesn’t understand what would bring them to make such seemingly irrational decisions, but it helps to show the depletion of a family’s mental state after a tragedy of this magnitude.

Throughout the novel, Zach remains the constant. He grows up in the face of tragedy and analyzes his surroundings with wisdom beyond his years. The silver lining in the novel is the relationship that grows between the brothers after Andy passes away. Before the shooting, the brothers were often at odds with each other, as Andy had behavioral issues, but following his death, Zach often talks through his issues with his brother by imagining his brother sitting with him in his hideout. By the end, he understands their relationship better than ever before.

Only eight days after the release of the novel, the deadliest mass shooting of 2018 occurred in Parkland, Florida, on Feb. 14. Navin’s “Only Child” offers critical insight into a growing issue in this nation.

Contact Camryn Finn at finnc@dukes.jmu.edu. For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter @Breeze_Culture.
Best of both worlds

JMU sophomore produced two albums and auditioned for ‘The Voice’

By ROBYN SMITH
The Breeze

Gina Castanzo is two different people.

When she’s performing, she’s Gina Zo. People notice Gina Zo. She’s cool. On stage, she dances around, letting her body do what it wants. She holds the mic close to her mouth and rocks back-and-forth, belting the lyrics.

Listening to her is like listening to Stevie Nicks or Florence Welch. Her songs are about love, romance and mended hearts. Her most recent single, “Chalkboard,” is like a twangy Cranberries romance and mended hearts. Her most recent album, “Free Your Soul,” was released.

Her drummer describes her as someone who “knows how to get what she wants.”

Castanzo, 20, is cool, but not that cool.

She’s a pescatarian. She loves nature. She keeps a prayer box next to her bed. She walks outside and takes a breath of fresh air every morning, just because it makes her feel good. There’s a broken toilet seat hanging proudly on the door frame, and above her bed were three circular hangings with fake flowers suspended in the middle, like plastic dreamcatchers. “They’re from Free People,” she said. “I really love them."

Beads hung over the door frame, and above her bed were three circular hangings with fake flowers suspended in the middle, like plastic dreamcatchers. “They’re from Free People,” she said. She works there in the summers.

Despite her schedule, Castanzo aims for eight hours of sleep. She gets mad when she goes to bed at midnight.

“I need two more hours of life,” she said. Castanzo has written and performed songs since she was 14 years old. She took private voice lessons with her music teacher at a Catholic high school in her hometown of West Chester, Pennsylvania, about an hour outside of Philadelphia. At a chorus concert when Gina was 16, her mother, Lisa Castanzo, realized her daughter had exceptional talent. Prior to that, she wasn’t sure.

“The Voice” audition wasn’t planned. She and Lisa were going to see “Phantom of the Opera,” because, according to Lisa, it seemed Gina was going into musical theater. It’d be good for Gina to see “one of the classics,” Lisa said.

Then, randomly, maybe serendipitously, the auditions were the same weekend. Gina signed up, choosing “Cecilia and the Satellite” by Andrew McMahon In the Wilderness as her audition song. Lisa was flummoxed.

“Oh my god, this is the worst song to pick,” she told her daughter, who was 18 at the time.

“Trust me, Mom, it isn’t. It isn’t,” Gina said.

“And I was like, ‘OK, whatever,’" Lisa said. “And she did it and she got through. I couldn’t believe it.”

Gina was on Blake Shelton’s team. The episode aired in spring 2016. After her blind audition, Shelton said, “Between your sound and your stage presence, we are literally the oddest couple in the history of ‘The Voice.’” Gina got cut during the battle rounds, on the ninth episode of the show.

After “The Voice,” Gina signed a contract with Raw Life Records, an independent studio based in Philadelphia. Even though recording in the studio proved to be stressful, she was working alongside a producer who seemed to know exactly what she wanted, and who could even finish her sentences.

Walking into the studio brought Gina a flush of excitement. Her face, “all cute,” she said, was at the top of a wall of famous people. As one of the “famous people,” she says sardonically, she signed a photo for the owner’s daughter that said the usual: “thanks for being you.”

Gina insists her popularity hasn’t been internalized.

“I would definitely not describe myself as famous,” she said. “I do not like when people say I’m famous, because I’m nowhere near famous … I wouldn’t even know how to be famous.”

Her first album, “My Weakness,” came out in February 2017. Just over five months later, her second, “Free Your Soul,” was released.

Gina is well-known in Philadelphia, and her shows draw between 60 and 200 people — not the crowd size of Madison Square Garden, but more than just family and friends. Her band is Philadelphia-based, and so she often travels back-and-forth on weekends either to rehearse or record.

“She talked up her third album in September, saying she’d been working on it for months and that it’d be released in the spring. Five months later, she said its release was delayed — it still wasn’t ready.

On a sunny February day, she emerged from her apartment with Shaolin, her dog, in tow. After a short walk, she settled in her bedroom. Beads hung over the door frame, and above her bed were three circular hangings with fake flowers suspended in the middle, like plastic dreamcatchers. “They’re from Free People,” she said. She works there in the summers. Castanzo sat cross-legged on her Anthropologie bedspread and petted Shaolin as she spoke about her future plans with her band.

She was deliberate in how she talked about her current record contract that would likely not be renewed. Though they were nice, she said they no longer saw eye to eye.

“The problem is, I’m not with the right people, I think, as far as production standpoints go, that are going to help me create everything I want,” she said. “I know for myself what’s going to benefit my career the most, and I want people who are going to agree with that.”

Castanzo’s upcoming album, “The Maine Reason,” is about an important relationship in her life, “with a guy, obviously; they’re all about guys. Screw guys.” It was the fastest she’d fallen for someone in her whole life. “He happened to go to school in Maine.

“Long story short, it crashed and burned,” Gina said.

With her contract up in July, she chose to avoid giving her label any more music that she claims she wouldn’t be able to use if they didn’t approve it.

“I’m not really worried about album sales. I’m more worried about coming out with something that I really love,” Gina said. “I want to put out something my band is super proud of, that we’ve worked on together, that we agree is ready.”

That could take months.

She flipped through her album collection.

“I’ve actually never listened to this,” she said, holding up Ted Nugent’s “Free-for-All.” “I don’t even know who these people are, but I really like how the cover looks and everything.”

She placed the disk on her Crosley record player and lowered the needle.

“OK, let’s see what it sounds like,” she said. “It could be awful.”

Nugent’s guitar riff starts playing.

“Oh, I’m into this. It’s rock,” she said.
from page 19

She played another song. “Oh, it’s kind of like KISS.”

The rest of her collection included a pre-Stevie Nicks Fleetwood Mac record, “How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful” by Florence + The Machine, “Honeymoon” by Lana Del Rey, some ABBA and a Stevie Nicks collection.

She held up “Angel Music Baby” by Gwen Stefani.

“She’s just so f------ cool. She’s always been such a huge inspiration of mine, especially doing ‘The Voice’ and everything,” Gina said.

“If things take off [with Gina], that’s everything I’ve ever hoped for,” Mazzenga said. “If things don’t work out with her, I hope not to hold her back or anything because of my limited availability.”

Mazzenga, 33, has toured nationally with previous bands. Now, he’s an accountant for QVC and has a family and a house in Philadelphia. He’s been with her band for almost two years and is the only original member left. Everyone else is between 20 and 23 years old, and life is taking them in different directions.

“She’s young enough,” he said. “She has time to make decisions.”

Despite riding out the next few months until her contract’s up, Gina’s still meeting new people, rehearsing with her band and writing new music.

“Praying helps. ‘I need something to be like, ‘OK, this was a bad day, but there’s going to be better days and the universe has a plan for why it was a bad day,’” she said. “I appreciate that I have one life and that this life needs to be amazing.”

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For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter @Breeze_Culture.
Walking into Agora Downtown Market, shoppers are sure to notice two things: the upbeat music and unmistakable aroma of freshly brewed coffee. Next to Lineage sits a coffee shop called Broad Porch Coffee Co., where cortadas, lattes, locally blended teas and cold brew are popular staples. The shop opened this past June and has been providing service to Agora shoppers ever since.

From looking at the storefront, it would be hard to guess that the little shop started with a Google search and a Shasta camper.

As a JMU student, alumnus Phil Duntemann ('12) never had a single cup of coffee. It wasn’t until after college when he started working in restaurants that he began drinking it every day. Coffee roasting came to Duntemann in 2014 after he randomly conducted a Google search on how to do it. Shortly thereafter, he began roasting coffee on the front porch of his house on Broad Street, later selling it to longtime friend and fellow JMU alumna Jill McMullan ('15).

McMullan always knew she wanted to be self-employed and start a small store. With experience in the restaurant business, her original idea was to open up a truck. She and her father purchased a 1963 Shasta camper and gutted it with that intention. After discussing it with Duntemann, she decided she wanted to sell his coffee out of the truck.

“The mobile thing just kind of seemed to be something that was a really good way to start because it’s — for the most part, it’s pretty easy,” McMullan said. “Then coffee became part of the conversation and when I started thinking about coffee, I was like, ‘Well, I really like Phil’s coffee, so I want to sell that out of the camper.’”

Everything changed when their friend, who’s a property manager at Agora, told them she had a spot open in the market. Changing their original truck plan, they moved to a storefront as a starting point for their business.

“The more we started thinking about it, it was like, we need a place to roast ... we’d need some sort of like brick and mortar for storage, for roasting, for anything, so we started thinking more and more about this space and it was like, ‘This just kind of makes sense as a launching pad because it kind of provides everything that we need in a small enough space for a pretty low price,’” McMullan said.

Duntemann and McMullan opened their coffee shop, Broad Porch Coffee Co. They pulled inspiration from Duntemann’s humble beginnings roasting coffee on his porch for the name. While they’ve opened the storefront, the coffee truck isn’t off the table. They hope to bring it back as the next phase for the small coffee shop.

Since opening, they’ve met people in Harrisonburg who have ties with coffee farms in Costa Rica, Honduras and Colombia. Although nothing is set in stone yet, McMullan and Duntemann eventually want to start broadening their connections.

To Duntemann and McMullan, sourcing is important. They currently obtain all their coffee through an importer who has a relationship with family farms.

“We’re not sourcing from these massive farms that just kind of collect coffee beans from all over the place,” McMullan said. “It’s like, a lot of them are sustainable and organic farms and associations, which is pretty cool, so we feel pretty good about where we get it from.”

McMullan decided to move up in the business world and open up a small coffee shop instead of selling brewed coffee out of a camper. The cafe is now burrowed between eight other vendors in downtown Harrisonburg.
PORCH | Local small coffee shop flourishes in Agora Downtown Market

Broad Porch reminds its customers to “BYOC,” or Bring Your Own Cup, to help protect the environment.

One thing that sticks out about Broad Porch is the fact that it’s the only small local storefront besides Shenandoah Joe’s that roasts its own coffee. Duntemann roasts all the coffee Broad Porch sells and places emphasis on freshness.

“It’s all about small batch, fresh roasted,” Duntemann said. “I roast usually a couple times a week, so the coffee is always really fresh and that’s kind of the thing, because when you go to a grocery store, the coffee could be months to years old — you don’t really know most of the time.”

Broad Porch also encourages customers to bring their own cups. When people bring their own mug, Broad Porch will fill it for a discount. Guests can also get a discount if they bring their own canisters to fill with whole coffee beans. Duntemann says they aim to “save the environment one cup at a time,” and McMullan adds that they try to cut back on waste in any way they can.

“We really want to put emphasis on not creating waste because coffee shops create a lot of waste, just in like cups and lids and sleeves and stirring sticks,” McMullan said.

JMU alumnus Bernard Fauntleroy (‘79) is a regular at Broad Porch. He enjoys the shop because of its environment.

“It’s good coffee,” Fauntleroy said. “The coffee’s very good, very fresh.”

The pair’s favorite part of owning Broad Porch is the learning aspect. McMullan also says it’s freeing to be her own boss. Most of all, they enjoy being a part of the community.

“It’s really cool to be a part of just the downtown Harrisonburg environment and community,” Duntemann said. “This market alone has 11 different vendors. We’re our own little community … we just joined the Friends of Downtown for [Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance], like the whole market did, so we’re going to be much more involved in just downtown events, which is kind of just fun to meet other people doing kind of similar stuff we’re doing.”

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Supreme Spring

Blake Pace | The Breeze

Fifty-eight wins, a 3-0 record in conference play and numerous CAA Player of the Week awards — and we’re just over a month into the season. JMU team athletics seem to have caught spring fever this season, as the five programs are off to a scorching hot start through this point in their respective seasons. This isn’t just two or three teams making up the slack of other struggling programs, as all five programs have winning records through the middle of March. Let’s break down the success of each program and expand on what may soon be the greatest season of play in the history of JMU athletics.

Ripping the back of the net

It’s hard to start off with any team besides the lacrosse program, which came into the year as the preseason favorite to win the CAA and the No. 3 ranked team in Division I. The team hasn’t fallen short of expectations, as its 7-0 start on the season has catapulted it to the forefront of the national discussion for one of the best teams in the country. They’ve beaten two nationally ranked teams this year — the formerly third-ranked North Carolina Tar Heels and the 20th-ranked Penn State Nittany Lions — and are averaging over 16 goals per game.

“This team is focused on body of work right now to get us a championship,” head coach Shelley Klaes-Bevans said.

The Dukes are led by a prolific trio of seniors — attacker Kristen Gaudian, midfielder Elena Romesburg and attacker Katie Kerrigan. Gaudian has 26 goals and four assists on the season, Romesburg provides the secondary scoring option with 26 goals and two assists and Kerrigan finds the other two for 18 assists and three goals. With the three dissecting defenses left and right, the Dukes don’t just have their eyes on a CAA Championship, but a national-championship run, too.

The new regime in JMU softball

Moving on to yet another prolific women’s program, the JMU softball team is off to an amazing 17-5 start and is the 23rd-ranked program in the ESPN.com/USA Softball polls. Even with the losses of head coach Mickey Dean to Auburn and senior pitcher Megan Good to a season-ending knee injury, the Dukes have trucked along thanks to their replacements — former assistant coach Loren LaPorte and sophomore pitcher and infielder Odicci Alexander.

The Dukes have been successful on offense, averaging nearly five runs a game on a .270 batting average with 17 home runs and 103 RBIs as a team. On the mound, the Dukes have a 1.55 ERA with an opposing batting average of .197 and 133 strikeouts. Leading on the mound and at the plate is Alexander, who’s earned nine of the Dukes’ 17 wins in over 96 innings pitched. With an ERA of 1.95, Alexander has struck out 96 batters faced and given up just 24 runs all season. Up to bat, Alexander has a .373 batting average including five home runs and 25 RBIs while striking out just six times in 67 at-bats.

“I think we are going to do really well,” sophomore utility Debbie Stuart said. “We’ve got a young team, but I think everyone is going to step up. I think we are going to go very far this year.”

JMU softball is poised for another CAA Championship and a run in the NCAA Tournament under the new regime — they’ll kick off the JMU invitational this Friday against the Stony Brook Seawolves.

Staying ahead of the game on the mound

Let’s talk about some men’s programs. JMU baseball is off to its second consecutive great start to a season and are 10-7 through the middle of March. While they’re floating just above .500 at home this season, the Dukes have been great on the road and hold a 5-3 record when playing elsewhere.

The Dukes have a solid rotation on the mound and 133 strikeouts on the season. The batter’s box is being dominated by senior pitcher Colton Harlow, whose four earned runs in five appearances has given him two wins on the season. At the plate for the Dukes, senior outfielder Adam Sisk is batting a solid .301 this season and posting three home runs and 11 RBIs. Freshman infielder Josh Jones has also been getting the job done at the plate — batting .307 with seven RBIs. Jones was also named CAA Rookie of the Week on Monday.

“Our pitching has been solid and that’s what’s been so exciting for us,” head coach Marlin Ikemberry said. “Our guys are competing and getting better every day.”

JMU baseball will have to remain alert, however, as its hot start to the season last year still ended with an underwhelming 24-27 season — something the Dukes will try to avoid repeating.
Historic starts on the tennis court

The men’s tennis program is off to its best start in over a decade with a 12-2 (2-0 CAA) start to the year. The Dukes haven’t just been winning their matches, they’ve been crushing opponents — only two of their wins have been within three points.

“We all push each other,” junior Pierre Kohler said. “And we stay positive and always believe in ourselves. If we believe in ourselves it will bring us to a higher level.”

The Dukes are fresh off a spring break trip to Florida, where they went 5-0 on the week. Leading the Dukes in singles competition is sophomore Paul Mendoza with a 15-7 record on the season. In doubles competition, Mendoza and senior Theophile Lanchier have led the way for the Dukes with a 10-4 record. They’ll travel to William & Mary this weekend for a CAA matchup against the Tribe.

Anything you can do, I can do better

Staying on the tennis court, the women’s tennis program is off to an even more impressive 12-1 (1-0 CAA) start on the year. Opening the season 11-0 before dropping their only loss to the North Florida Ospreys, the women were red-hot — shutting out opponents such as Saint Francis, Howard University, Morgan State University, Sacred Heart University and Savannah State University.

“We have a lot of fun, but also at the same time, we’re looking to have a bright future,” head coach James Bryce said. “We’ve got our eyes set on hopefully trying to compete for a conference championship. We never want to guarantee anything, obviously, but we’re looking to compete for one this year.”

At the forefront for the Dukes is freshman Liz Norman and sophomore Jona Roka. The two have a combined 20-5 record in singles play and have been leaving opponents in shambles. In doubles play, the dynamic duo of senior Dylan Owens and Roka have a 6-1 record on the season, with the pairing of junior Abby Anos and Norman following suit. The Dukes will have their eyes set on a CAA Championship this year — their first in program history.

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JMU club lacrosse bond takes form on field

By MICHAEL CHLADON
The Breeze

As the spring club sports season progresses, JMU teams are looking to end the school year on a high note. The women’s club lacrosse team is no exception.

The team had its first tournament at UNC Chapel Hill at the end of February. It faced four tough matchups against Delaware, Alabama, Duke and the home Tar Heels.

“We had a great game against Duke, who usually beats us,” junior Molly Fitzpatrick, president of the club and defender, said. “We ended 14-5 during halftime and came out scoring six more goals in the second half to defeat them easier than we ever had in the past.”

However, the other three games didn’t go as well as the team had hoped for. JMU lost against Delaware, UNC and Alabama, despite having a high level of confidence heading into the game against the Crimson Tide.

The game against UNC proved to be a major struggle for the Dukes. The team left the field wondering what they needed to do differently after a tough loss.

“I felt we just weren’t on top of our game and we came out flat in the first half and they took advantage of it,” Fitzpatrick said. “I felt that our team effort was there, but it was not clicking on the field.”

The season has gotten off to a bit of a rocky start. However, the team is already aware of what it needs to do to improve for their next matchup.

“We learned that it is really time to step it up at practices,” junior McKenzie Blot, the club’s vice president and defender, said. “All of the teams that we have played were very competitive and we must grow from each of our losses to show these teams that we are just as competitive and ready to win.”

The team will travel down I-81 to Virginia Tech for its next tournament on March 24-25 and will then have home-field advantage in Harrisonburg on April 7-8. The Dukes hope that seeing some familiar faces in the stands will help rally the organization. In the meantime, the team plans to practice more offensive strategies to try to determine what needs to be done to be more competitive.
The organization has learned a lot from the previous season. Out of the 28 players on the roster this year, there are seven freshmen, which required some adjustment for the team to get familiar with the new faces on the field. For freshman attacker Julie Paschal, getting accustomed to the team was a major learning point from the fall season.

"Each person on our team plays differently and has different styles," Paschal said. "So by now, I know how to play and work with each player so our team as a whole can be successful."

Adjusting to college life is tricky enough. Paschal also had to figure out how to juggle learning about the team with learning in the classroom during her first semester at JMU.

"[Joining the team] was also quite the adjustment because I was still learning the ropes of college while I was trying to balance it with practice," Paschal said.

The club’s leadership creates a positive and growing environment within the team. Fitzpatrick runs the team’s practices, playing both the role of teammate and team coach. She hopes her leadership translates to their performance on the field.

"I try my hardest each and every day and I hope it’s noticeable to the team," Fitzpatrick said. "I hope I give the team everything they are looking for in a leader and also help to guide the team by involving everyone for advice, new plays or new practice plans so it’s not just me being in charge because it is difficult to step up as a leader."

The club provides a fun outlet for competitive players. Being a part of a club sport is the perfect formula for students looking to play their favorite sport in a laid-back environment while still facing tough competition.

"What I enjoy most about the club sport atmosphere at JMU is definitely the family it has given me."

**Molly Fitzpatrick**
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Duke Blue Devils

**By BRANDON ELLIS**

**The Breeze**

Duke enters as the No. 2 seed in the Midwest Region of the NCAA Tournament. The Blue Devils have been on a roll in the last month, only losing to UNC — twice — and Virginia Tech and playing spectacularly on the defensive end of the floor. Senior guard Grayson Allen is also finally finding his stroke from the arc.

In the last 10 games, Allen has averaged 18.6 points per game on 42 percent shooting from the field. Also, they have the ACC Player of the Year in freshman forward Marvin Bagley III, who’s averaging a double-double record only halfway through the season against Wake Forest and currently has 21 on the season.

The Blue Devils’ defense has allowed only 65.2 points per game in the last month, which is better than the first 14 games of the season, in which they allowed an average of 73.9 points per game. Allen has been crucial to the success of the defense, helping communicate at the top of the zone.

Sure, there are teams that are more experienced in the tournament, such as Villanova, Kansas, Michigan, Purdue, Michigan State and the ACC champions of Virginia, but this Duke team is the most talented on paper. When you have one of the greatest coaches of all time in Mike Krzyzewski coaching your team, you’ll have a pretty good shot at winning in March.

On top of that, the ACC is the best conference in college basketball, proving that losing to UNC — twice — and Virginia Tech and playing spectacularly on the defensive end of the floor. Senior guard Grayson Allen is also finally finding his stroke from the arc.

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On top of that, the ACC is the best conference in college basketball, proving Duke can play and beat the best.

The Midwest Region is one of the easiest parts of the bracket this year, with only two viable contenders other than Duke, which are Kansas and Michigan State. There’s evidence to show that Duke is a little bit better than Michigan State when the Blue Devils defeated the Spartans in Madison Square Garden on Nov. 14 by a final score of 88-81. That was the night Allen lit it up from 3-point range by hitting 7-of-11, leading to 21 of his career-high 37 points. While it was an early-season game, the result should matter with the possibility of facing off again in the tournament. Kansas’ issue is sophomore center Udoka Azubuike’s health. Azubuike missed the Big 12 tournament with a knee injury and if he’s not in game shape for the NCAA Tournament, they may not even make it to the Elite Eight, let alone the Final Four.

Looking at the rest of the bracket, many big teams are clumped up in the South and East Regions. Those regions include teams like Virginia, Villanova, Kentucky, Arizona, Tennessee, Cincinnati, West Virginia, Wichita State, Texas Tech and Purdue. All of those teams are outstanding and those regions have the most upset potential, with the Virginia Tech/Alabama potentially being a matchup problem for Villanova in the East and Arizona being a possible tough test for Virginia in the Sweet 16.

Duke has the players, the coach and a favorable bracket to make a tourney run that’ll be memorable for the folks of Durham, North Carolina.

**CONTACT** Brandon Ellis at ellis3b@dukes.jmu.edu. For more sports coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.
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**MONDAY-FRIDAY 11AM-2PM**

- **2 Slices + One Topping** (Served with Fries & Drink) $4.15
- **Steak & Cheese Combo** (Served with a Drink) $7.99
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**PIZZA SPECIALS**

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  - **16" Cheese Pizza & 2 Liter Coke** ($1.75 per topping) $9.99

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**SUBS**

- **Steak Sub** $5.75
  - Lettuce, Tomato, Onion, Mayo, and topped with cheese.
  - Add mushrooms, green peppers or hot peppers for $.50 each
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  - All of the above toppings

**PASTA**

- Spaghetti Silciliana
- Fettuccini Alla Panna
- Spaghetti Mediterranea
- Penne Alla Romana
- Penne Al Pesto
- Penne Alla Vodka
- Spaghetti Capricciosa
- Spaghetti Carbonara
- Penne Primavera
- Spaghetti with Meat Sauce
- Baked Spaghetti
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- Penne Spinach & Mushrooms $44.95
- Spaghetti with Meat Sauce $44.95
  - (Sausage or 12 Meatballs)
- Spaghetti w/ Meat Sauce or Marinara $29.95
- (Sausage, Peppers and Onions) $49.95
- Homemade Meatballs $1.50 each
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Weekly SUDOKU
by Linda Thistle

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